

University of Montana

## ScholarWorks at University of Montana

---

Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, &  
Professional Papers

Graduate School

---

1958

### Investigation of the audience-judge agreement factor in college debate

John Copley Travis  
*The University of Montana*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd>

**Let us know how access to this document benefits you.**

---

#### Recommended Citation

Travis, John Copley, "Investigation of the audience-judge agreement factor in college debate" (1958).  
*Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, & Professional Papers*. 2754.  
<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd/2754>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, & Professional Papers by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@mso.umt.edu](mailto:scholarworks@mso.umt.edu).

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE AUDIENCE - JUDGE  
AGREEMENT FACTOR IN COLLEGE DEBATE

by

John Copley Travis  
B. A. University of Denver, 1957

Presented in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

1958

Approved by:

  
Chairman, Board of Examiners

  
Dean, Graduate School

AUG 21 1958

---

Date

UMI Number: EP35886

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



UMI EP35886

Published by ProQuest LLC (2012). Copyright in the Dissertation held by the Author.

Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

All rights reserved. This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code



ProQuest LLC.  
789 East Eisenhower Parkway  
P.O. Box 1346  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 - 1346

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my appreciation to Dr. Ralph Y. McGinnis, Chairman of the Montana State University Speech Department, whose many hours of assistance were invaluable in the preparation of this thesis.

I would also like to thank the students who participated in the experiment for their time and cooperation.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION. . . . .	1
The Problem . . . . .	1
Definition of Terms Used. . . . .	3
II. SURVEY OF THE LITERATURE. . . . .	4
The Trained Debate Judge. . . . .	4
The Untrained Audience. . . . .	23
III. THE METHOD. . . . .	34
IV. FINDINGS OF THE EXPERIMENT. . . . .	37
V. EVALUATION AND CONCLUSIONS. . . . .	40
Conclusion. . . . .	42
Suggestions for Further Study . . . . .	43
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	46
APPENDIX . . . . .	48
ABSTRACT . . . . .	51

## LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
I. Audience Vote . . . . .	37
II. (Percentage of Audience Agreement to Judges' Ratings). . . . .	38
III. A table of the total ballots cast compared with the judges' decision showed: . . . . .	39

## CHAPTER I

### Introduction

Debate as a college activity does not ordinarily take place before large audiences. Usually only a judge and sometimes a chairman-timekeeper witness the contest. In this setting the debaters practice the art of rhetoric, encompassing public speaking, argumentation and persuasion. As Holm points out, "The primary duty of the debater . . . is to cause as many of his hearers as possible to accept his beliefs."<sup>1</sup>

Since only the judge's decision is tabulated and known it is very difficult for debaters to find out whether they have presented a case with persuasive appeal to audiences at large or whether they have only appealed to or alienated a single atypical judge. The question facing the debaters in this situation is, "How atypical is the trained judge from an untrained audience?"

### The Problem

Statement of the problem. The purpose of this study is to determine the amount of agreement between trained and untrained judges when awarding decisions in college debate.

---

<sup>1</sup>James Nobel Holm, How to Judge Speech Contests (Portland, Maine: Platform News Publishing Company, 1938), p. 102.

Importance of the study. Debate is a practical exercise designed to teach argumentation, persuasion and public speaking. At least one of its aims is to develop effective speakers capable of swaying audiences.

The only test of audience appeal in most debates is the appeal to a single judge. If this judge, versed in a knowledge of debate, is using a criterion of judgment restricted to his own profession and not representative of lay audiences, then the debater is being trained to sway an audience of debate coaches, a most unusual gathering.

The educational value of debate as a practical exercise in effective speaking may be limited by the type of audience used, namely the trained debate judge. The importance of this study is dependent upon the importance of this statement.

Limitations of the study. The untrained audiences used in this study were comprised exclusively of undergraduate college students. Care was taken to eliminate those students who were trained in argumentation and debate in an effort to insure that no member of the untrained audience would have a formalized criterion of judging debate similar to that of a trained debate judge. It would be naive, however, to assume such an audience would not have more training in critical thinking than a non-college audience.

This study is therefore limited to finding the amount of agreement between trained debate judges and "untrained" college audiences.



### Definitions of Terms Used

The purposes of this study necessitated that a significant difference in training exist between the trained and untrained judges that were used.

Trained judges were therefore selected on the following basis: only those judges with five or more years experience in teaching debate on the college level as a part of their teaching position in the speech department of a college or university.

Untrained judges were defined as follows: only those students with no training or practice in formal debate or argumentation either in high school or college and who had no more speech training than one course in beginning public speaking.

## CHAPTER II

### SURVEY OF THE LITERATURE

The survey of the literature explored material written on the subject of:

- I The criteria of judgment used by trained debate judges, and
- II The criteria of judgment used by audiences untrained in formal debate.

Under the category of trained judges, much material was to be found. Many textbooks on debate devoted a chapter to judging. In the category of untrained audiences however, very little has been written. Studies dealing with the lay judge's criteria of judgment for debate were woefully few. What had been written was largely based on opinion unsubstantiated by experimental research.

#### I The Trained Debate Judge

In attempting to set forth the criteria which trained debate judges use when judging debate, discovery was made that no set criteria had ever been agreed upon by any of the national debate societies. This lack of accepted criteria was discussed by Baird.

Just what effective debating is has never been settled or agreed upon, as anyone who reads current texts or listens to professional discussions on the subject will note. However, the instructions to judges, which are sometimes quite elaborate, stipulate

that "the decision is to be given on the merits of the debate rather than on the question."<sup>2</sup>

This emphasis upon "debating" rather than on the "merits of the question" was found in the vast majority of debate textbooks. Foster, in his textbook published in 1908, gave the following instructions to judges:

.....the award should not be made on the merits of the question but on the merits of the debate; that is to say, consideration as to what may seem to a judge the intrinsic merit of either side of a question should not enter into or determine the award; but the award ought to be made to that college or team which evinces greater argumentative ability and better form as speakers.<sup>3</sup>

The overwhelming majority of textbooks advocated the "merits of the question" viewpoint for debate judges. However, Judge H. N. Wells, Coach of Debate at the University of Southern California Law School dissented strongly from this position. He insisted that the "case" or "weight of evidence" should be the basis of a debate decision. Judge Wells and Professor James Milton O'Neill, then Professor of Public Speaking at the University of Wisconsin debated their opposing positions in the Quarterly Journal of Speech.<sup>4</sup>

Professor O'Neill defended the "merits of the question" or "skill in debate" criterion while Judge Wells defended the "weight of evidence" criterion.

---

<sup>2</sup>A. Craig Baird, Public Discussion and Debate (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1937), p. 333.

<sup>3</sup>William Trufant Foster, Argumentation and Debating, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1908), p. 466.

<sup>4</sup>Quarterly Journal of Speech, 3:336; 4:76, 398.

Professor Lew R. Sarett of Northwestern University was asked to render a decision in the controversy. Nichols and Baccus summing up Professor Sarett's position, made the following statement:

. . . he showed that the two were really arguing for the same thing and that if they would go back and clarify terms and definitions they would see that it took skill in debate to make the case prevail, that we accepted the weight of evidence theory because the skill of the debaters made the preponderance of the evidence appear. . .<sup>5</sup>

The main question facing the debate judge is: "What constitutes good debating?" To answer this question many textbooks set forth criteria of good debating.

Crocker advised the following criteria:<sup>6</sup>

- 1) Analysis
- 2) Rebuttal and refutation
- 3) Adaptability
- 4) Presentation
- 5) Material

Some textbooks worded the criteria to be used by judges in terms of questions.

#### Criteria of Evaluation

- A. Is the Analysis of the Problem Sound?
  - 1) Does the Arguer See the Specific Problem in Relation to the Total Situation?
  - 2) Is the Meaning of the Problem Clear?
- B. Does the Speaker Know the Facts?
- C. Are Inferences from Data Logical?
- D. Are the Argument and Evidence Organized Properly?

---

<sup>5</sup>Egbert Ray Nichols and Joseph H. Baccus, Modern Debating, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1936), pp. 355-356.

<sup>6</sup>Lionel Crocker, Argumentation and Debate (New York: American Book Company, 1944), p. 184.

- E. Has the Speaker Adapted Arguments to the Audience?
- F. Has the Speaker Adapted His Language to the Audience?
- G. Does the Speaker have an Effective Delivery?
- H. Is the Speaker Aware of Conflicting Arguments?<sup>7</sup>

Baird suggested that instructions to judges should contain the following questions:

- A. Which team shows a more complete knowledge of the subject?
- B. Which team shows throughout the debate a greater skill in analysis of the question?
- \*C. Which team shows superior skill in using arguments backed up by evidence and in building up a logical case?
- \*D. Which team shows greater skill in refutation and rebuttal? (Remember that a debate is an intellectual grapple, a give-and-take discussion.)
- E. Which team is superior in rhetorical organization and in the use of English?
- F. Which team is superior in delivery, including platform manners, voice, bodily action, enunciation, ability in extemporaneous speech? (Discount memorized speeches.)
- G. Which team is superior in persuasiveness, including tact, humor, fair-mindedness, and similar qualities? (Distinguish genuine argument from mere oratorical embellishment.)

(Although no mathematical percentages should be assigned to the various items above, it is agreed that in general material and argument are more important than delivery. The more weighty points are starred.)<sup>8</sup>

Donald Hayworth and Robert B. Capel, in their book Oral Argument presented five criteria for the debate judge. The explanation of these points was interesting in that the subjective aspects of judging was illustrated.

---

<sup>7</sup>William A. Behl, Discussion and Debate (New York: Ronald Press Company, 1953), pp. 293-295.

<sup>8</sup>Baird, op. cit., pp. 333-334.

1. Case. Occasionally a case is constructed unusually well, but in general the quality of cases in most debates is about the same, and in any given debate, whether it be a class contest or an inter-collegiate debate, the teams are usually of fairly equal mental caliber. For this reason, any real difference between the two teams in respect to the case presented is likely to be highly significant in determining the final decision. A great deal of skill in delivery, rebuttal, and the other elements of debating, is required to compensate for a fundamental weakness in the case.

2. Evidence. The judge is forced to determine the quality of the evidence presented in a debate chiefly upon general impressions, based upon definiteness of citation, quality of sources, and significance and abundance of material. One speech may be fairly bristling with evidence and another almost lacking in satisfactory evidence. The judge has no objective measure to apply.

3. Refutation. If the judge lists the various arguments advanced, he will be able to check off those that are satisfactorily answered and thus be able to analyze the debate fairly accurately from the standpoint of refutation, estimating its effectiveness by what he knows about logical processes and the psychology of audiences.

4. Delivery. This category includes everything which has to do with the physical and vocal expression of the speaker, and is to be judged in much the same way as that of any other public speaker. It must be remembered, however, that the debater is speaking in an unusual situation, and hence, as indicated earlier, should not use the same technique as in many other situations. For example, the typical Easter sermon. Whether one debater is superior to another in this respect depends to some extent on the likes and dislikes of the judge. If there is little difference between the teams in this respect, the judge will weight delivery less in arriving at his decision.

5. Speech Composition. The judge must also consider the debater's skill in the use of the audible symbols of speech -- that is, the clearness, force, and attractiveness of his language. Most of these considerations are naturally matters of personal preference, since debate judging obviously cannot be

reduced to mathematical or scientific formulas. The final judgment, however, is likely to be much more accurate if the record is kept of the various divisions of analysis as each speaker finishes.<sup>9</sup>

A. Craig Baird published an exceedingly comprehensive "Outline for Detailed Criticism of a Debate" in his book Public Discussion and Debate published in 1928. In the later revised edition published in 1937 this material was omitted.

#### Outline for Detailed Criticism of a Debate:

(Underscore the items that express your judgment; when possible, furnish examples of faults.)

#### I Analysis

- A. Cause for discussion: not given, relevant, irrelevant, argumentative, overemphasized
- B. History: full, overdeveloped, inaccurate, accurate, irrelevant, satisfactory, up-to-date, lacking in recent facts
- C. Definitions: absent, too few, inaccurate, vague, unnecessarily involved, technical, clear, sound
- D. Admissions: damaging, judicious, trivial, significant
- E. Issues: not given, too many, too few, contradictory, overlapping, trivial, irrelevant, superficial, sound, complete, logical in arrangement
- F. Partition of the subject: not given, mechanically stated, skillfully stated, overlapping, not exhaustive
- G. Organization in general: relevant, irrelevant, impressive, unimpressive, persuasive, nonpersuasive

#### II Knowledge of the subject: superficial, thorough (examples, if possible, of misinformation)

---

<sup>9</sup>Donald Hayworth and Robert B. Capel, Oral Argument (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1934) pp. 359-361.

### III Evidence and argument

- A. In general: ample evidence, sufficient, insufficient, effective, striking
- B. Generalizations: too few cases, sufficient in number, fair examples, not fair examples, satisfactory
- C. Analogies: not used, true, false, appropriate
- D. Causation: wrong causes, insufficient causes, wrong effects, logical and, in general, satisfactory
- E. Ignoring the question: argumentum ad hominem, argumentum ad populum, argumentum ad ignorantiam, appeal to the past (give examples if possible)
- F. Begging the question: argument in a circle, question-begging words, iteration, use of a premise which requires proof
- G. Use of authorities: competent, incompetent, too few, too many, vague, too much quoting from one authority
- H. Inconsistencies (give examples)

### IV Skill in rebuttal and refutation

- A. The second speech: too short, scattered in ideas, clear, poorly organized, well organized, impressive, dull, fair, brilliant, good, extemporaneous, intelligent, legitimate in strategy, unfair in tactics
- B. In general: frequent throughout the discussion, extemporaneous, sound, poor, impressive
- C. Special methods of refutation: reductio ad absurdum, method of residues, dilemmas, exposing irrelevant arguments

### V Style

- A. The debate in general: well organized, clear, coherent, forceful, poorly organized, poorly arranged for coherence and for emphasis, vaguely outlined, evidence of good briefing,



evidence of poor briefing, introductory, transitional, summarizing elements

- B. Sentences: too long, too short, too few questions, confused, clear, coherent, emphatic, loose, periodic, balanced, rhythmical, harsh, monotonous in structure
- C. Words: repetition (examples), lack of repetition, clear, technical, emphatic, mechanical, trite, original, spontaneous, varied, dull, figurative, concise, diffuse, concrete, hackneyed, artificial, rhythmical, literary, non-literary

## VI Presentation

- A. Platform courtesy: failure to address chairman or audience, address of chairman and audience well planned
- B. Attitude toward opponents: fair, hostile, judicial, unduly sarcastic, patronizing
- C. Attitude toward audience: pleasant, patronizing, appealing to sense of justice, appealing to sense of fair play, expressing indignation, expressing selfishness
- D. Gestures: too few, too many natural, stiff
- E. Bearing: listless, eager, lacking in purpose, unduly stiff, careless in position of feet and hands, aimless in position of the eyes, unduly nervous
- F. Method of delivery and voice: poor breathing, monotony of tone, too fast, too slow, effective, natural in tone, too loud, too soft, forceful, lacking in force, declamatory, memorized, extemporaneous, impromptu
- G. Pronunciation and enunciation: excellent, fair, poor, slovenly, overnice (examples of faults)
- H. Qualities of the speaker: uprightness, modesty, boldness, tact, lack of tact, dignity, lack of dignity, humor, lack of humor, calmness, irritability, pugnacity, mental power, mental mediocrity<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup>A. Craig Baird, Public Discussion and Debate (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1928) pp. 361-363.

To further the understanding of what constitutes skilled debating, Summers and Whan published the following criteria of debate:

#### The Requirements of Good Debating

On the basis of present-day standards, good debating must satisfy all of the following requirements:

First, each debater must show an intelligent understanding of the question, and knowledge of all of the important facts concerning it.

Second, there must be evidence of careful planning. The arguments presented must be organized into a unified, constructive case, presenting the points or contentions which offer the strongest reasons for accepting the desired point of view concerning the question.

Third, both constructive speeches and rebuttals must be carefully organized so that each point stands out clearly and the case as a whole is easy to follow.

Fourth, every contention advanced must be amply supported with evidence or "proof," sufficient to establish the point as true in the mind of an unprejudiced listener. Rebuttal arguments must be supported with proof materials no less than those advanced in the constructive argument.

Fifth, every important constructive point advanced by the opposing speakers, and every attack of consequence upon the main points in the debater's own case, must be considered in rebuttal. The refutation must be effective; every opposing argument attacked should be overthrown or at least seriously weakened.

Sixth, the ideas presented must be expressed in effective language. Good English is necessary in any type of speech; but over and above the demands of good grammar and good English style, the debate argument must be presented in language which conveys the speaker's thought most effectively.

Seventh, the debater must be a good public speaker, talking directly to his listeners in an

informal, conversational style, but with earnestness and vigor of expression which compels attention.<sup>11</sup>

In discussing the judge's criteria, McBurney, O'Neill and Mills pointed out that a debate ballot normally includes from four to ten items "but it should cover analysis and case, evidence, attack and defense, and delivery."<sup>12</sup>

They further clarified these criteria by listing them in ballot form with sub-headings:

Analysis and case

clear  
logical

Evidence

pertinent  
Dependable  
sufficient

Argument

sound  
comprehensible

Rebuttal

adaptation and attack  
defense of own case

Delivery

easily heard  
extemporaneous  
direct  
courteous<sup>13</sup>

In the survey of the literature only one textbook was found which devoted itself exclusively to the field of

---

<sup>11</sup>Harrison Boyd Summers and Forest Livings Whan, How to Debate (New York: the H.W. Wilson Company, 1940) pp. 21-22.

<sup>12</sup>James H. McBurney, James M. O'Neill and Glen E. Mills, Argumentation and Debate (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1951) p. 281.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

judging competitive speech activities. This was How to Judge Speech Contests by James Noble Holm.

Dr. Holm made a survey of judges' opinions concerning the criteria of analyzing debates. Since this was a far more detailed treatment of the subject than was found in other works it was felt profitable to quote the section dealing with the judging of debate almost in its entirety.

What are the things the judge must watch for in analyzing the work of the two teams? A cross-section of general opinion seems to show the following:

(1) Analysis and interpretation of the proposition. Technically it is the duty of the affirmative to define the proposition and establish the grounds for debate. It is the privilege of the negative, however, to do so in case the affirmative fails, or to dispute for good reason the interpretation of the affirmative. Above all, it is the prime duty of each side to make clear to the audience the analysis and interpretation of the proposition, and of the issues as they arise. The judge should insist on the debate being made plain to the audience.

(2) Analysis of the debate as it proceeds. The successful team is the one which is best able to pick out the trend of the debate, see the vital issues as they evolve from the clashes of opinion, and follow and make clear to the audience those issues.

(3) Organization of material. Carefully the judge should balance the opponents in their ability to organize material. By this is meant the way the speakers arrange the arguments to fit the audience, the logical development of the argument, the division of the case between or among the speakers on a side, teamwork in argument, vividness, simplicity, unity, coherence, and emphasis.

(4) Evidence to support assertions. One of the values of debate is the manner in which it forces the debaters to support their statements. The judge

should watch to see that every argument and rebuttal is substantiated with sufficient fact, statistics, or testimony. Failure to do so on the part of a team should be penalized according to the importance of the argument, and on the other hand, failure of the opponents to demand evidence should also be taken as a sign of weakness on their part.

(5) Reasoning; inference based on evidence.

Some teams have a wealth of evidence in their argument, but use it poorly. This is a major weakness. Argument should be logically built, arising from sufficient grounds, and proceeding by clear thinking to sound conclusions. A judge should charge poor thinking against a team, but should balance it by another black mark against opponents who fail to discover the unsound argument.

(6) Delivery. Since debate is an exercise in public speaking and persuasion, a good delivery is essential. A direct, conversational attitude; alert, vigorous presentation; a pleasing voice; a volume and rate suited to the audience and room; clear enunciation and proper pronunciation; free use of body and arms; and above all the ability to extemporize and adapt one's self to opposing arguments are all marks of a good speaker.

(7) Effectiveness of direct refutation. How well does a speaker meet and match the arguments of his opponent? This is one of the characteristics which separate debate from other types of public address, and in this ability the debater shows his true worth. Refutation should be well planned, direct, and adapted to the exact argument it is designed to overthrow. A thorough knowledge of the subject is one of the essentials of good rebuttal, a knowledge which must be used in a keen and well-organized attack.

(8) Effectiveness of counter refutation. Does the debater make his arguments, attack his opponents, and stop there? He shouldn't. Vigorous re-support of his original contentions where they have been attacked, by bring in new facts and evidence, and an equally vigorous counter-attack where initial rebuttal has been weakened by the opposition are necessary to carry the argument along. "Answer the answer" is the way Miss Maxine Dye of the University of Akron puts it.

Nor should this counter-attack and re-support be scattered. It should center around the vital issues of the debate.

(9) Keen pursuit of the vital issues. By all means the debater should show an ability to choose the important arguments for emphasis, and to discard the lesser ones. Constantly as the debate progresses the clash should narrow down to a few netly contested points. It takes a good debater to accomplish this and not waste his time on trivialities.

(10) Personal attitude toward audience and opponents. The debater should accept his opponents as ladies and gentlemen and the audience as his equals. Any deviation from such an attitude by way of bombastic delivery, sarcasm, condescension, or an overbearing attitude should be frowned upon.

(11) Persuasive factors. More and more, debating is coming to be looked upon as an exercise in public speaking. The debate texts of earlier years made no mention of audience beliefs and interests; attention was centered upon syllogisms and causal relationships. Today, however, every modern debating text has at least one chapter devoted to the psychology of the audience.

In just such a way are the persuasive elements becoming more important in judging debates. Arguments should be motivated, that is, they should offer the audience some good reason for acceptance--not cold, logical reasons, but warm, friendly ones. The choice of words is important, too, for some words carry winning connotations, while their synonyms may have an unpleasant reaction on the part of the audience. Entire cases should be adapted to the audience--for instance, a debate team of mine, speaking in behalf of state operation of electrical service before a small rural audience, made their entire plea on the basis of improved rural electrification. And surely the best debater, all other things being equal, is the one with the most pleasant and likeable personality. These things must all be considered.

#### Suggestions for adverse criticism

Are there some things which the judge should especially guard against? Some people believe these items should be penalized.

(1) The declaiming of memorized speeches. Debate should be extempore in manner, and speeches written and memorized simply do not fit into the picture. Can high school students be trained to extempore debating? The answer is that for three years high school students under the writer's direction did not write out a single speech; yet several cups and medals give evidence of their ability to speak extemporaneously in an effective manner.

This does not mean that the "block" method of preparing speeches should be eliminated, but it does mean that any memorization which tends to defeat adaptation and good rebuttal should be marked against a speaker.

(2) Reading of speeches. Need anything more be said?

(3) Use of unquestionably false or perverted evidence. Trickery and falsehood should be defeated at all costs, so that a judge may feel justified in deciding a debate entirely upon the discovery of the use of false or fraudulent evidence.

(4) Unsportsmanlike conduct; overbearing attitude. Debaters, like others, are apt to feel superior to their opponents or audience at times. Again, they may pout and sulk when they have lost a fair decision. Attitudes such as these should be penalized when evidenced on the debate platform.

(5) Obviously tricky, fanciful, unreal plans. Debate is to prepare its students to take their places in a very real democracy. Yet on the forensic platform many forget reality and come forth with ideas the like of which have never before been known. With suave delivery and rapid reading of statistics often used to pass over the instability of the fanciful plans, debaters of this type many times gain a decision they do not deserve. Such practices should be frowned upon as leading to political trickery and gullibility in later life.

(6) Quibbling. Mere denial of argument, undue emphasis on obscure points, and undue wrangling over the meaning of terms constitute quibbling, a habit found in some beginning debaters, and one which should be eliminated.

(7) Tricky or unfair strategy for victory only. Much has been said about the use of trickery and the penalization of it by the judge, so that little more need be added. If the true purpose of debate be kept in mind, trickery will be of no avail; it is up to the judge. This does not mean, however, to penalize legitimate strategic devices. Strategy has been defined as using one's resources in such a way as to gain an unexpected advantage over opponents. There is nothing unfair in strategy itself, but unfair methods of strategy may be used. It is these the judge should guard against.

(8) Improper platform etiquette. The judge should always include in his criticism admonitions against loud talking at the tables while opponents are speaking, or actions contrary to parliamentary usage. Extremely improper etiquette may be penalized by the judge.

(9) Consistent improper use of English. Speaking extemporaneously, the best of us are apt to make small errors in grammar and usage for which we may be easily forgiven, so why should a debater be penalized for inadvertent slips? The speech contestant, however, who shows himself to have a poor command of the fundamentals of the language should be marked for adverse criticism.

(10) Inability to make arguments clear to the audience. Many a misunderstanding during the final criticism of a debate arises when the judge penalizes a team for failing to answer an important argument. "Why, I did reply to that," the injured student answers. The truth is that the student has answered the argument sufficiently in his own mind, but has failed to convey the refutation clearly to his listeners. Since the final test of a debater is his ability to "put his point across," a lack of clarity and emphasis must be considered important when it means that the audience fails to grasp the point.

#### Suggestions for favorable criticism

If there are a few specified items which the judge should be expected not to approve, conversely there should exist some he should applaud. These are suggestive:



(1) Definite attempts to meet on common ground; concession. If a team can throw away part of its prepared argument in order to meet the contentions of the other side more squarely, and if it can judiciously agree with parts of an opposing case for the same reason without weakening its own, it should be commended. Concession to an opponent in order to meet on more vital ground is not an admission of defeat, it is cooperation to make clear the real issue.

(2) Realizing the debate into a single issue. While a debate cannot always be boiled down to one definite clash of opinion, nevertheless as the contest progresses and time grows shorter, the ability on the part of a team to isolate and emphasize the crucial issue or issues is a commendable asset.

(3) Special actions becoming ladies and gentlemen. If part of the aim of a contest is to train for social contacts, surely any actions on the part of a contestant which mark him as being polite and courteous should be cited approvingly.

(4) Special aptitudes of voice and ability. Clear, pleasing voices; outstandingly alert minds; particularly engaging personalities; any marks of unusual ability as a student--any or all of these should be given encouragement by favorable criticism.

(5) Excellent teamwork. Because a debate is a clash of teams, not of individuals, superior teamwork on the part of one side should be an advantage to that side. The division of the case, handling of refutation, and general attitude, all indicate cooperation on the part of the members of a team.

(6) Immediate and direct clash of issues. Some debaters, especially novices, wait until the final round of speeches to begin the attack upon their opponent's arguments. Such a course results in a less interesting and profitable debate. Refutation should begin with the first negative speaker and continue throughout the debate. The judge should encourage the practice.

(7) Maintaining the psychological offensive. The team which begins to attack first, and keeps

its opponents busy trying to explain and made clear their stand has achieved a position which is difficult to overcome. If a team is able to maintain the offensive, it not only prevents damaging attack on its own arguments, but places its opponents in the role of trying to rebuild and explain an almost lost cause. The psychological offensive is not a trick nor an unfair advantage; it is the mark of a strong-minded and purposive team.

### Some controversial points

On some techniques and methods of debate, judges and instructors alike are greatly divided in their opinion. A few of these points should be mentioned; the judge will have to decide in his own mind the worth of each.

(1) Use of strategic devices. Should question after question be shot at the opposition in order to confuse and overwhelm it? Should the demand that opponents answer a given argument be held valid? Is a plausible but far-fetched interpretation of the proposition permissible? These are some of the questions arising over the use of strategic devices. Opinion is divided on the legitimacy of some of the "tricks of the trade."

(2) Necessity of an affirmative plan. Should the affirmative have to present a definite plan for action when upholding a question of policy? This question can start an argument wherever debate coaches and judges are gathered, as answers to queries on the point indicate opinion being divided almost equally in the author's survey. The general feeling seems to be "yes" in high school debating and "no" in college circles; a guess being hazarded might say that this is because high school students can work better with something definite by way of argument, while college students can handle abstractions with ease. Just how detailed a plan should be, however, cannot be decided by those who favor one.

(3) Omission of strong arguments. Should a team leave out well-known and powerful arguments in order to center its case around a surprise attack? In other words, should debate be for the purpose of making clear both sides of a current important issue, or is it a matching of wits and skill?

(4) Failure to attack weak or illogical arguments. Should a team attack arguments which on their very face are weak and fallacious? Should a failure to attack such arguments be scored against a team? Should weak argument count for a team if not attacked? These questions have met a variety of answers, with no common settlement.

(5) Acceptability of personal letters as evidences. Those who favor the use of personal letters as evidence point to the initiative and work indicated by their use, and argue that such is the mark of the superior debater. On the other side it is pointed out that letters give one side an advantage over opponents, and that argument can be made more even by excluding them. What do you think?

(6) Necessity of accepting the affirmative analysis. Does the affirmative have the right of establishing the analysis of a proposition without challenge? While most coaches and judges take the negative on this question, there is a vigorous minority who say that the affirmative analysis must stand, in order to compensate for the greater width of selection available to negative argument.

(7) Use of charts and graphs. Are charts, maps, and graphs acceptable for use in debate? Former practice made common use of these helps, but the trend seems to be toward entirely oral presentation. At the present, opinion seems to be split regarding the work of visual material.

#### Warning to judges

(1) Don't let personal estimate of arguments influence the decision unduly. Act only as a member of the audience. Even though you may not believe that unemployment insurance will prove practical, it is not up to you to answer the arguments of the affirmative on that proposition, that is the job of the negative. You are a member of the audience, and must divorce yourself from all personal beliefs unless it is plain that the entire audience enjoys your viewpoint. In that event, it is not the argument which must be scored against, but the failure of the debaters to adapt their material to the audience. An argument well established by a debater should stand unless attacked by the opposition. It is a poor judge who interposes his opinion to meet an argument.

(2) Remember that every debate presents a different problem. Listen always with an open mind. Just because one debate was not outlined the way you had heard the subject before does not indicate that it was a poor debate. Each contest must meet the immediate, local situation; it should not be forced by you into preconceived ideas of what it should be.<sup>14</sup>

The survey of the literature showed a considerable amount of agreement on the factors which should be taken into consideration by a judge when evaluating a debate.

The emphasis placed on certain criteria varied between texts. The wording of criteria and the scope which each factor included differed also. Without exception, however, the textbooks agreed that the judge's decision should be based upon "which team did the better debating" and not upon "the merit of the question." It is axiomatic that the judge be unprejudiced upon the question or at least extremely careful that any prejudice he may have be excluded from his decision making.

An excellent summary of the points of view expressed in the majority of textbooks was found in Ewbank and Auer's Discussion and Debate:

While judges differ in the relative importance they assign to subject matter and delivery, and in their preference for different types of evidence and methods of analysis, they generally agree that decisions should be based on answers to these five questions:

1. Which team excelled in effective public speaking?
2. Which team made the better analysis of the questions?

---

<sup>14</sup>Holm, op. cit., pp. 113-124.

3. Which team was superior in supporting its case with good evidence and sound reasoning?
4. Which ~~team~~ was better at adapting its case to that of the opposition?
5. Which team made the better rebuttal speeches?<sup>15</sup>

## II The Untrained Audience

The material previously set forth dealt with an analysis of the factors involved in the thought process of rational beings. The emphasis placed on rational thought by debate textbooks does not however, overlook the fact that people do not always think rationally. Ewbank and Auer make the observation that:

. . . men may want to be rational creatures; may indeed think they are; but there is nothing which automatically compels men to act rationally.<sup>16</sup>

When men do not think rationally they are said to think emotionally. Most textbooks listed the factors of "rational thought" under Argumentation and "emotional thought" under Persuasion.

Adolf Hitler said of audiences at large:

The people, in an overwhelming majority, are so feminine in their nature and attitude that their activities and thoughts are motivated less by sober consideration than by feeling and sentiment.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup>Henry Lee Ewbank and J. Jeffery Auer, Discussion and Debate (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 2d. ed., 1951) pp. 473-474.

<sup>16</sup>Ewbank and Auer, op. cit., p. 39.

<sup>17</sup>Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1939) p. 237.

This thought was extended by Foster to include trained minds: "But even men with trained minds find it difficult to act in accord with convictions when emotions pull the other way."<sup>18</sup>

The observation that even the trained judge is influenced by persuasion (emotion), was tempered by this statement: "The less intelligent the audience, the greater the temptation to rely on persuasion."<sup>19</sup>

There appears to be an assumption inherent in these two statements by Foster that the intelligence of an audience is somehow related to its training. This assumption appeared in many textbooks. The warning was given that debate judges make their decisions in terms of argument and rational thought but audiences tend to rely more on emotional persuasion.

Behl described three ways in which audiences come to decisions. He stated:

The general characteristics of an audience are of vital importance to the argumentative speaker or writer. He should realize that, in general, persons tend to believe what they want to believe, that they tend to rationalize, and that they tend to react to suggestion.<sup>20</sup>

Lionel Crocker reinforced this position, at least in its first two categories, but added "entertainment" as a third category.

---

<sup>18</sup>William Trufant Foster, Argumentation and Debate (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2d. ed., 1936), p. 231.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 232.

<sup>20</sup>Behl, op. cit., p. 178.

Several more or less obvious observations on the audience decision should be made. First, the audience is likely to be swayed more by emotional appeals than by close reasoning. To get an audience to divorce itself from what it likes and dislikes is almost impossible. Again, the audience likes to have its own beliefs handed back to it. If the speaker wants the votes of the audience, he must phrase and express its sentiments. . .

Then, too, the audience likes to be entertained. The speaker may have to go out of his way to bring in the light touch, the dramatic touch. Humor helps relieve the strain of following an argument. An illustration which makes the audience laugh and at the same time advances the argument is a splendid tool of persuasion before an audience. Sarcasm, wit, ridicule, clever sayings -- all have their place in talking to an audience. The speaker must be vivid. Make the audience see what you are saying. . .<sup>21</sup>

The majority of writers in the field of audience analysis did not credit the audience with a high degree of rational ability. Hayworth and Capel followed this trend but gave an entirely different set of criteria which they felt audiences used. The emphasis here did not rest on emotional argument but on four qualities of the debaters themselves.

#### The Actual Basis of Most Inexpert Decisions

Unfortunately, many debates are judged by those who know very little of the technique of debate, and what they do know may be misleading. Such judges may frequently cast their ballots without knowing the real reasons for their decisions; having decided, they proceed to find whatever they can to justify their decision. It pays to know the actual basis of most such decisions, in order to be prepared for them.

A. Appearance. It is impossible for any judge, even a good critic, to avoid being influenced by the appearance of the teams, especially if there

---

<sup>21</sup>Crocker, op. cit., p. 202.

is a marked difference between the two. This factor in decision is justified to some extent, since the appearance of the speaker is a matter of some significance in persuasion. It is not necessary here to prescribe the kind of clothes to be worn or the kind of hair cut; it is sufficient to say that the debater should be well dressed without having an all-dressed-up-for-Sunday appearance. And, more important yet, he should appear both honest and intelligent.

When a team with an unprepossessing appearance steps on the platform, both judge and audience are bound to receive an unfavorable first impression. The danger that confronts an uncritical judge is that he is thinking of the necessity of deciding the debate from the very beginning and he may formulate a tentative conclusion at once which he later seeks to justify.

B. Force. There is no doubt that many inexperienced judges are strongly influenced by vigorous speaking and gestures, provided they are not carried too far. On the other hand, in a woman debater such delivery is frequently considered offensive. She is expected to secure emphasis by less direct means. At the same time, even the woman debater should use more force in debating than in almost any other type of public speaking.

C. Poise. There are certain sure marks of lack of poise, such as referring to "this evening" in an afternoon debate; saying "affirmative" when "negative" is meant; lack of fluency in choice of words; fumbling with cards; long pauses for any reason; looking at one's opponents instead of at the audience. A person who has judged few debates likely to be influenced unduly by such trivial factors without being aware that they form the real basis of his decision. To a certain extent, however, even a skillful judge will take such things into consideration, because the individual or the team with the greater poise will be more likely to influence the audience -- which is, of course, the ultimate consideration.

D. Reputation. If for any reason a judge is of the impression that one of the teams represents a superior group, he may unconsciously look for reasons to justify a decision favoring that side.



This may happen if the seniors are debating the freshmen, if a well-established literary society is debating a new one, if a great university is debating a relatively small college, or if the son or daughter of a well-known and respected person is meeting unknown debaters. Of course this factor may also work in the opposite direction--a judge may expect a "walk-away" by one team and find the other team so much better than he had expected that he gives the decision to them.<sup>22</sup>

Ewbank and Auer devoted a chapter to "How Individuals Think" in their book Discussion and Debate published in 1951. This was a more definitive approach than was found in most books on the subject. Not only was it well documented as to source of material but it did include logical thinking as a tool of audience judgment.

Four kinds of thinking were explored:

I Emotional Behavior. In this category many kinds of emotional stimuli were mentioned, anger, fear, pity, disgust, etc.. The authors emphasized the point that these emotions are in no way to be taken as separate and distinct stimuli but as a ". . . single basic and diffused pattern of response."<sup>23</sup>

It is further stated that emotional behavior has the following characteristics:

a. It is often disorganized and unspecialized, reflecting a lack of discrimination in perception as well as in reflection. Thus the same stimulus may at different times draw different responses, since emotional behavior lacks the specialized use of muscles and highly localized tensions of intellectual behavior. Again, however, some emotional behavior may appear to be calculated and economical.

---

<sup>22</sup>Hayworth and Capel, op. cit., pp. 372-373.

<sup>23</sup>Ewbank and Auer, op. cit., p. 41.

b. It is often excessive behavior, involving more activity than is essential for a response to the stimulus calling it forth. At other times emotion may actually inhibit excessive action, or even make momentarily impossible any overt action at all.

c. It is usually accompanied by an aroused physiological and psychological state, resulting in total, all-in-one-piece response. This condition is characterized by pronounced glandular and muscular activity, a sensory awareness of these bodily changes, and a motor set rendering the individual capable of reacting.

d. It is subject to only limited control, usually on a subcortical level, probably centering in the thalamus.<sup>24</sup>

II Intellectual Behavior. The authors, having described the emotions, and their undirected, undisciplined roles in motivating the individual, showed that ". . . the intellect is a tiny speck afloat on the vast sea of emotion."<sup>25</sup>

To give direction to emotional behavior, intellectual behavior is called into play.

When we speak of intellectual behavior we refer to what is also called thinking. This is the process by which man reflects, incorporating and integrating his habits, experiences, beliefs, and attitudes into an organized whole. When he encounters an indeterminate situation he seeks to transform it into a determinate one. In this process he may analyze the elements in the situation, call upon his accumulated stock of knowledge and belief to provide ways of meeting the problem, speculate about the probable results of each alternative, and finally make a choice. Man undertakes these intellectual processes with varying degrees of rationality. But, generally, man wants to be rational. Indeed, the story of man's education, maturation, and development might be written in terms of his efforts to develop increasingly intellectual patterns of behavior.<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

### III Habitual Behavior.

When an individual has made a satisfactory adjustment to a situation through an emotional or an intellectual response, or a combination of them, and has repeated the response many times in similar situations, he tends to develop a pattern of habitual behavior. The habitual response is thus acquired, organized, and patterned. Many of daily acts are "from force of habit," and it is well, for we can thus do routine things without expending emotional or intellectual energy. Habits have been described as being the residues of emotional and intellectual reactions; as they become more set, less of their original emotional or intellectual character is apparent.

For the individual, . . . , however well-established habitual behavior results in satisfying adjustments to familiar situations. Our basic desires, wants, and interests may be served as well by habitual as by emotional or intellectual behavior.<sup>27</sup>

IV Non-Logical Thinking. Under this category, seven subdivisions were made. It was interesting to note that many authors restricted audience thinking to this area alone.

#### A. We Tend to Think in Random Fashion

("Day-dreaming" or "haphazard intellectual activity lacking both pattern and persistence.")<sup>28</sup>

#### B. We Tend to Rationalize.

This mode of non-logical thinking may be defined as the process of alleging rational motives and arguments to justify our non-rational, or non-logical beliefs and desires.<sup>29</sup>

#### C. We Tend to Confuse Desire and Conviction.

"We tend to believe that which we wish to believe."<sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 44

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 45

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 48

## D. We Tend to be Suggestible.

" . . . tendency to accept unvalidated and uninvestigated assertion."<sup>31</sup>

## E. We Tend to Succumb to Personal Appeals.

" . . . implied flattery of the reader or listener, instead of logic."<sup>32</sup>

## F. We Tend to Accept Specious Arguments.

" . . . arguments which are in themselves inconsistent and illogical, or arguments which are not supported by adequate evidence."<sup>33</sup>

## G. We Tend to Ignore Intellectual Appeals.

" . . . especially if they encounter our rationalizations or desires."<sup>34</sup>

## V Logical Thinking. (Reflective thinking)

The authors explained that reflective thinking is " . . . the capstone level of intellectual activity. . ."

Reflective thought is "active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends." And the function of reflective thought is "to transform a situation in which there is experienced obscurity, doubt, conflict, disturbance of some sort, into a situation that is clear, coherent, settled, harmonious." Thus we are concerned with the thought process which ordinarily takes place when we are aware of a difficulty, or face a problem, and attempt to work out a satisfactory practical solution. We are not concerned with non-logical

---

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 49

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 50

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 51

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 52

processes, but with deliberate and purposeful problem-solving.

Man's ability to think out the truth, to find a solution for his problems, instead of having to work them out on a trial-and-error basis, is precious, but it can also be tedious. This fact may be quite as important as our tendencies toward rationalization and other forms of non-logical thinking in explaining our avoidance of reflective thinking. Yet if we are to solve the problems which confront us in our increasingly complex society we must be willing to tackle those problems on a mature reflective basis. We must, in short, take time to thing.<sup>35</sup>

By way of explaining the modus operandi of Logical Thinking, the subject was divided into five steps:

1. The first step in logical thinking is to be aware of the existence of a problem.
2. The second step in logical thinking is the location and definition of the problem.
3. The third step in logical thinking is the suggestion of possible solutions for the problem.
4. The fourth step is a natural consequence of the last: the rational elaboration of the solutions which have been suggested.
5. The fifth step in logical thinking is experimentation or testing which will lead to verification or rejection of the solution selected in the preceding phases.<sup>36</sup>

Baird did not state any criteria by which audiences make decisions but he did list "suggestion" and "contrasuggestion" as a means of swaying the listeners.

#### Methods of Suggestion

In general, when inhibitions are avoided or removed, the use of suggestion is possible. Do not hurt

---

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 53

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., pp; 54-55

your argument by fatal admissions or by the avoidance of ideas favorable to your cause. Equally important is it to remove inhibitions obviously in the minds of the hearers.

Positively, the touching off of any responses in conformity with the interests of the audience will contribute to the right action. Appeals to experience, to the fact that the thing suggested has already been accepted, or that authority approves it, will also impress the listener. Repetition is one of the most obvious means of suggestion. Imagery is another. Still another is that of the speaker's appealing personality and strong mentality. Uprightness, calmness, aggressive-ness, earnestness, modesty, tact, dignity, humor, broadmindedness, and similar qualities impress and lend great weight to the argument. The use of the impulse to imitate is still another means. Arousing vivid mental pictures of the audience engaged in the action desired will tend to lead them to assume the position suggested.

At times contrasuggestion is effective, by which is meant the reaction to suggestion in what is supposed to be the opposite way to that intended. "Don't support the team," or "Stay away from the game," or "Don't interest yourself in this problem," will sometimes have just the opposite effect. Contrasuggestion is often applied to those people who desire distinction or who are determined to resist the pressure of public opinion. Speech symbols, of course, have a profound suggestive force either in establishing a tendency to respond to an idea or in touching off the final response.<sup>37</sup>

Not all authors agreed that audiences are primarily swayed by emotion. Nichols and Baccus stated that: "Most people resent such appeals to gain belief as an insult to their intelligence. They require that beliefs be based upon facts, evidence, proof, truth; and these things are the specific grounds of argumentation."<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup>Baird, op. cit., pp. 267-268.

<sup>38</sup>Nichols and Baccus, op. cit., p. 10.

The same authors, when discussing audience decisions, said:

(The audience decision) . . . is a failure when the decision is required on the techniques of debating. Audiences do not understand debating rules and procedure very well and are not usually interested in technical matters.<sup>39</sup>

It can be seen from this survey that there was far less agreement on the criteria used by audiences in making decisions in debate than there was on the criteria used by trained judges.

The majority of authors credited the audience with little rational ability and maintained that emotion was their prime criteria. In the minority were those who believed that audiences are swayed by logical argument and facts.

Experimental studies dealing with audience thinking in terms of debate appeared to be non-existent.

---

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 82

## CHAPTER III

### The Method

The original plan was to record a debate on tape and have audiences and judges decide from this one sample which team had done the better debating. Several objections were raised to this plan:

1. The audience and judges would not be supplied with visual cues normally present in contest debating.

2. The untrained audience would find difficulty in determining which speaker was talking on which side of the question.

3. The recorded debate would be atypical of contest debating and would therefore nullify the results of the study.

The advantages of such a method were two-fold. The first advantage lay in overcoming the lack of large audiences at debate tournaments. Small groups, or even individual listeners could be obtained to evaluate the debate and the results totalled to provide one large audience. The second advantage was that a recorded debate could be used to ascertain the amount of agreement between trained judges, an interesting sidelight to a study of this kind.

The disadvantages to the recorded debate were felt to outweigh the advantages and the recorded debate was dropped from consideration.

Since the purpose of the study was to ". . . determine



the amount of agreement between trained and untrained judges when awarding decisions in college debate," the decision was made to gather experimental data from actual debate situations. For this purpose the 1958 Annual Northwest Tau Kappa Alpha Speech Tournament was used.

#### The 1958 Annual Tau Kappa Alpha Speech Tournament

This tournament was held May 1st through 3rd, at Montana State University, Missoula, Montana, and was participated in by students and their coaches from ten states. Even though this was an interstate contest the usual problem of getting audiences was experienced. Since compulsory attendance by students would tend to negate the worth of their judgment, volunteer audiences were sought.

These audiences consisted of undergraduate college students. They were carefully screened as to debate experience and training in argumentation. No ballots were included in the experimental findings that were cast by students with training in either of these two subjects, whether in college or high school.

The audience was asked to fill out their ballots giving a decision on the following basis:

"In my opinion, the better debating was done

by:            AFFIRMATIVE            NEGATIVE

(Do not indicate a tie--please circle only one.)"

None of the audiences was used in debates where their own school participated. This was done as a safeguard against

prejudice detrimental to good standards of judgment. No other questions concerning the debate were asked of the untrained audience.

The judges were carefully screened to insure that they met the criterion of "trained judge" defined in Chapter I:

". . . those judges with five or more years experience in teaching debate on the college level as a part of their teaching position in the speech department of a college or university."

Each judge was asked to award the decision to the team that did the better debating.

The judges were also asked to rate the teams in terms of skill in debating on the following scale:

Superior  
Excellent  
Good  
Fair  
Poor

This was done to get a measure of the closeness of the debate.

Only those debates with an audience of ten or more people, not including the trained judge, were used as a basis of study.

## CHAPTER IV

### Findings of the Experiment

#### Tau Kappa Alpha Tournament

##### Analysis of the Audiences:

Ten debates had a sufficient audience untrained in debate to be deemed useful to this study (i.e. an audience of ten or more).

The audience consisted of 23% females and 77% males.

The average age was 21.4 years.

An Analysis by college class showed:

Freshmen.....41.8%

Sophomore.....24.6%

Junior.....17.2%

Senior.....16.4%

62.3% had training in public speaking.

None had training in Argumentation or Debate, either in High School or College.

122 ballots were cast by the audiences.

Table I  
Audience Vote

Debate	Total Ballots	Audience		Judges' Vote			Amount of Agreement btwn judge & audience
		Affirm- ative	Neg- ative	Judges' Vote	Affirm- ative	Neg- ative	
1	10	4	6	Neg.	Good	Excel.	60.0%
2	12	8	4	Aff.	Excel.	Fair	66.6%
3	11	2	9	Neg.	Good	Sup.	81.8%
4	11	4	7	Neg.	Fair	Excel.	63.6%
5	12	4	8	Neg.	Fair	Excel.	66.6%
6	13	13	0	Aff.	Sup.	Poor	100.0%
7	21	15	6	Aff.	Excel.	Good	71.4%
8	12	5	7	Neg.	Excel.	Excel.	58.3%
9	10	8	2	Aff.	Excel.	Fair	80.0%
10	10	5	5	Neg.	Excel.	Sup.	50.0%
	<u>122</u>						

Six different sets of team ratings were given by the judges. These appear in Table I. The judges were asked to rate the teams according to the following scale:

Superior  
Excellent  
Good  
Fair  
Poor

When the percentage of audience agreement was listed in a column in descending order of agreement and compared with the judges' team ratings the following order became evident:

Table II  
(Percentage of Audience Agreement to Judges' Ratings)

Debate No.	Audience Agreement	Judges' Ratings
6	100.0 %	Superior - Poor
3	81.8 %	Superior - Good
9	80.0 %	Excellent - Fair
7	71.4 %	Excellent - Good
2	66.6 %	Excellent - Fair
5	66.6 %	Excellent - Fair
4	63.6 %	Excellent - Fair
1	60.0 %	Excellent - Good
8	58.3 %	Excellent - Excellent
10	50.0 %	Excellent - Superior

A table of the total ballots cast compared with the judges' decision showed:

Table III

Total Ballots Cast	Agreeing with the judge	Disagreeing with judge	Percent of total agreement
122	86	36	70.4

## CHAPTER V

### Evaluation and Conclusions

It is evident that to make a judgment some basis for evaluating the factors involved must be present.

In the survey of the literature a great deal of agreement was found as to what kinds of criteria the debate judge should use in evaluating debate. Most authors agreed that argumentation and debate skill should be stressed and that emotional arguments only should be used to reinforce logic and evidence. Very little emphasis was placed on emotion as an important element of the debate which the judge should evaluate.

On the other hand, audiences untrained in argumentation and debate were held by these same authors as thinking largely in terms of emotion and as having very little rational ability.

In the experiment discussed in the two previous chapters, trained debate judges and untrained audiences had a rather high percentage of agreement. This agreement ranged from 100% in Debate No. 6 to 50% in Debate No. 10.

At no time did an untrained audience show a contrary opinion to that of the trained judge. At least 50% of each audience was in accord with the trained judge. As a glance at the tables in Chapter IV will show, only two debates had an audience-judge agreement of less than 60%.

The judges' rating scale when compared with the percen-

tage of agreement of the audience (Table II) showed that, in general, the closer the debate the lower the percentage of audience agreement. The greater the disparity in performance between contestants, the less room for doubt as to who won. There were, however, two notable exceptions to this generalization. Debate No. 7 gave a higher audience agreement than might be expected and Debate No. 10 a lower one. In Debate No. 8 the judge rated both teams "Excellent" and the audience agreed as to which team won by a 58.3% majority. In Debate No. 10 the judge rated one team "Excellent," the other "Superior," yet the audience split 50 - 50 on the decision.

In this regard, rating scales are notoriously inaccurate as many studies have shown. Bernard Carp stated:

In spite of all attempts to weigh, test, define its terms, objectify the criteria, and otherwise standardize the procedures, speech rating scales are in fact tests of the judge's own acuity and speech standards rather than an objective rating of the examinee.<sup>40</sup>

For the purposes of this study a rating scale was used only to tell the closeness of the debate. No attempt was made to draw other statistical data from this kind of evidence. Observation reveals, however, that in 6 cases out of 10 the relative closeness of the debate as seen by the judge appeared to have been born out by the audience.

---

<sup>40</sup> Bernard Carp, A Study in the Influencing of Personality Factors in Speech Judgments (New Rochelle, N.Y., The Little Print, 1945) p. 46.

In view of the low opinion toward audiences that most writers on debate have exhibited, the noting of the rather high percentages of audience agreement found in this experiment became interesting. Certainly no refutation of the authors quoted was intended in this discussion. Too many possibilities were left unexplored to warrant such a position. Some of these possibilities were enumerated in "Suggestions for further study."

Conclusion. As was stated in Chapter I, most college debating is done before an audience of one, namely the trained debate judge. One purpose of this study was to determine whether this kind of judge is atypical of audiences in general. Due to the limitations imposed by the extreme difficulty of getting audiences for college debate, only college audiences were used.

The findings in this experiment revealed that the trained judge was not atypical of college audiences. Regardless of the criteria of judgment used, both audience and judge showed no contrary opinions. In seven debates more than 60% of the audience agreed with the judge. In eight cases out of ten, the more closely matched the teams the more tendency there was for the audience to split its vote.

The system now in vogue in debate tournaments disallows any tie decisions. Even if both teams are perfectly matched, neither gaining an edge on the other, the trained judge is



required to give the decision to only one team. An even numbered audience, not allowed to confer before awarding the decision, can have no such restriction. The possibility exists that a "tie" debate would split the audience 50 - 50. It is equally possible that an audience giving a decision based on the flipping of coins would render a 50 - 50 decision. In a close debate the audience might well be using a criterion about as reliable as flipping a coin. For that matter, so might a trained judge, though most would be loathe to admit it.

The findings revealed by this experiment showed that audiences tended to agree with trained judges more than they disagreed and that the more unevenly matched the teams, the higher the amount of agreement between audience and judge.

Suggestions for further study. The audiences used in this study had some interest in debate. The amount of agreement between audience and judge when debate is held before classes on a non-voluntary basis could constitute a problem for further study.

Audiences without college background could enter another facet to the findings. Universities with extension programs of debate, where the debaters give demonstration debates to lay audiences, could serve as an excellent proving ground for such an experiment. A rehearsed debate where each side used a different approach, one team emphasizing logic and the

other emotion, might give a clear cut picture of how audience opinion is actually swayed.

An experiment designed to throw light on how audiences evaluate debate, what criteria they think important, including an analysis of their reasons for voting as they did, might do much to settle the question of whether audiences are capable of rational judgment.

In the survey of the literature each author stressed the judges' supposed emphasis on argumentation and debate technique. An experiment to determine the way judges actually decide which team won could take this speculation away from the field of unsubstantiated assumption and either confirm or deny it with some experimental evidence.

More experimentation of the type used in this study, utilizing larger audiences and other tournaments, over a longer period of time would be helpful to evaluate the audience - judge agreement factor.

More studies designed to discover what judges feel are important criteria in debate might help as a basis to getting more unified judging in this field.

Gertrude Johnson pointed out:

To arrive at an agreement as to the judging of any contest, speech or otherwise, demands that there be an understanding of the objectives of the contest and a knowledge of the elements which made these objectives possible of attainment.<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>41</sup>Gertrude E. Johnson, "Extemporaneous Reading Contests: Judging Them." Wisconsin High School Forensic Association. Mimeographed pamphlet.

The importance of developing a unified criteria of debate is illustrated by Thorpe.

The judgment must, in order to be reliable, be based on some common unit of measurement that will as far as possible provide unanimity among judges of diverse views.<sup>42</sup>

In light of the above statement, an interesting study could be based on ascertaining the amount of agreement between trained judges when awarding decisions in debate.

The importance of good judging to the whole field of competitive speech was pointed out by O'Neill.

The decisions to be rendered. . . are of great importance. Correct decisions will enable this work to serve a really significant educational end. Incorrect decisions, decisions rendered upon improper grounds, may so pervert the whole activity that the total result will be more harm than good.<sup>43</sup>

The ends of good speech training will be served wherever experimentation is undertaken to evaluate the reliability of the judge's decision in terms of the educational aspects of debate.

---

<sup>42</sup>Louis P. Thorpe, Psychological Foundation of Personality, (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., 1938) p. 545.

<sup>43</sup>James M. O'Neill, A Manual of Debate and Oral Discussion (New York: The Century Company, 1920) p. 7.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### A. BOOKS

- Baird, A. Craig. Public Discussion and Debate. Boston: Ginn and Company, 1928.
- Baird, A. Craig. Public Discussion and Debate. Boston: Ginn and Company, 1937.
- Behl, William A. Discussion and Debate. New York: Ronald Press Company, 1953.
- Carp, Bernard. A Study in the Influencing of Personality Factors in Speech Judgments. New Rochelle, N.Y.: The Little Print, 1945.
- Crocker, Lionel. Argumentation and Debate. New York: American Book Company, 1944.
- Ewbank, H. L. and Auer, J. J. Discussion and Debate. New York: Appleton, Century, Crofts, Inc., Revised, 1951.
- Foster, William Trufant. Argumentation and Debate. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1908.
- Foster, William Trufant. Argumentation and Debate. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, Revised, 1936.
- Hayworth, D. and Capel, R. B. Oral Argument. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1934.
- Hitler, Adolf. Mein Kampf. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1939.
- Holm, James Noble. How to Judge Speech Contests. Portland, Maine: Platform News Publishing Company, 1938.
- McBurney, J. H., O'Neill, J. M. and Mills, G. E. Argumentation and Debate. New York: Macmillan Company, 1951.
- Nichols, Egbert Ray and Baccus, Joseph H. Modern Debating. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1936.
- O'Neill, James M. A Manual of Debate and Oral Discussion. New York: The Century Company, 1920.
- Summers, H. B. and Whan, F. L. How to Debate. New York: H. W. Wilson Company, 1940.

Thorpe, Louis P. Psychological Foundation of Personality.  
New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1938.

#### B. PERIODICALS

O'Neill, J. M. "Comment on Judge Wells' Last MS.," Quarterly Journal of Speech, IV, No. 4 (October, 1914).

O'Neill J. M. "The Juryman's Vote in Debate," Quarterly Journal of Speech, III (October, 1917).

Sarett, L. R. "A Juryman - Critic's Vote," Quarterly Journal of Speech, IV, No. 4 (October, 1918).

Wells, H. N. and O'Neill, J. M. "Judging Debates," Quarterly Journal of Speech, IV, No. 1 (January, 1918).

Wells, Hugh Neal. "Judging Debates," Quarterly Journal of Speech, III, No. 4 (October, 1917).

Wells, H. N. "Juryman or Critic," Quarterly Journal of Speech, IV, No. 4 (October, 1918).

#### C. PAMPHLETS

Johnson, Gertrude. "Extemporaneous Reading Contests: Judging Them," Wisconsin High School Forensic Association. Mimeographed pamphlet. Undated.

## APPENDIX

## 1958 ANNUAL NORTHWEST T. K. A. SPEECH TOURNAMENT

Montana State University, May 1-3, 1958

NOTE: To each member of the audience.

This ballot will be used as an important part of a research experiment. Please answer each of the following questions by circling the appropriate answer:

- |  |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. Have you debated in high school?            | Yes | No |
| 2. Have you debated in college?                | Yes | No |
| 3. Have you taken a course in argumentation?   | Yes | No |
| 4. Have you taken a course in public speaking? | Yes | No |

INTERCOLLEGIATE DEBATEAffirmativeNegative

<u>(College-University)</u>		<u>(College-University)</u>	
Date	Room	Hour	Round

In my opinion, the better debating was done by: AFFIRMATIVE  
(Do not indicate a tie; please circle only one.) NEGATIVE

Signed\_\_\_\_\_

Class: Fr. So. Jr. Sr. Other  
(circle one)

Age\_\_\_\_\_ Male-Female\_\_\_\_\_

BALLOT FOR JUDGING DEBATE

Round No. \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Hour \_\_\_\_\_ Room \_\_\_\_\_

Judge \_\_\_\_\_ Chairman \_\_\_\_\_

Affirmative \_\_\_\_\_ Negative \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

Without regard to my personal convictions on the merits of the proposition, it is my belief that the better debating was done by the \_\_\_\_\_ team of \_\_\_\_\_ (School). It is my further belief that in comparison to the ratings of "SUPERIOR", "EXCELLENT", "GOOD", "FAIR" and "POOR", the two teams should be rated:

Affirmative \_\_\_\_\_ Negative \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Judge



## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the amount of agreement between trained debate judges and audiences untrained in argumentation and debate, when awarding decisions in college debate.

The 1958 Tau Kappa Alpha Debate Tournament held at Montana State University, Missoula, Montana supplied audiences and debaters for this study.

Volunteer audiences were instructed to award their decisions to the team which in their opinion did the better debating.

The trained judges were instructed to evaluate each team by the following rating scale:

Superior  
Excellent  
Good  
Fair  
Poor

In this manner an estimate of the teams' respective abilities was obtained giving a measurement of the closeness of the debate. The trained judges were also asked to award the decision to the team which did the better debating.

Ten debates were used in this study, each having an audience of ten or more not including a trained debate judge. The audiences consisted of undergraduate college students.

Results:

In none of the debates studied did the audience disagree with the trained judge. In one debate the audience split, on a 50 - 50 basis, rendering no decision. In seven debates over 62% of the audience agreed with the judge. In one debate 100% of the audience agreed with the judge.

The results of the study showed that undergraduate college audiences tended to agree with trained judges when awarding decisions in college debate. Further; the more evenly matched the teams, the less the audience tended to agree among itself as to which team had done the better debating.